

## Interview Summary

**Person(s) Interviewed:** Rusty Harris-Bishop, Region 9 Communications Coordinator

**Interviewers:** Julia Burch and Susan Studlien

**Date of Interview:** December 2, 2015

**Time of Interview:** 3:30-4:30p.m.

Rusty was interviewed on December 2, 2015, as part of an internal EPA After-Action review of the Agency's response to the release at Gold King Mine in Colorado on August 5, 2015. Rusty was deployed to Durango in the role of Public Information Officer from August 9 – 28, 2015. He served as a communications liaison with OPA.

### **Synopsis of Interview:**

#### **General Observations and Recommendations:**

Rusty learned of the GKM release late August 6 when his supervisor forwarded a notice from the sheriff closing the river. Rusty got official notice from Region 8 on August 6. He was deployed to Durango August 8 and reported to the JIC on Sunday morning, August 9. (b) (5) DPP [REDACTED]. At Durango the JIC had no phone capability so no clearly designated way to get or answer media inquiries. There was no Incident or Unified Command structure. Region 8 office in Denver, not Durango, seemed in the lead for media.

(b) (5) DPP [REDACTED]

Rusty was notified August 9 that Navajo Nation delegation and two Senators from Colorado would be there that day and wanted a tour of the mine site. With no command structure in place, Rusty had to make all arrangements to pick up Navajo visitors and take them to site. No contact with anyone at mine site, including OSC. Region 9 had taken samples of plume each day but had no data yet. Rusty got Navajo Nation visitors up to site and they sampled bright orange water in Cement Creek.

No security at mine site, which anyone could access.

#### **Emergency Operations Center / Incident Command / Unified Area Command Structure:**

(b) (5) DPP [REDACTED]

**Lesson Learned:** (b) (5) DPP [REDACTED]

#### **Data and Communications:**

(b) (5) DPP



Lesson Learned: (b) (5) DPP

